

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 00951 181252Z
ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 ACDA-10 CIAE-00 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-07 FEAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 SS-15
/083 W

-----181312Z 078791 /65

R 181247Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4783
INFO ERDA WASHDC
ERDA GERMANTOWN
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

UNCLAS BONN 00951

DEPT PASS TO NRC

E.O.: 11652 N/A
TAGS: ENRG, GW
SUBJECT: NUCLEAR INCIDENT IN GERMAN GUNDREMMINGEN
NUCLEAR POWER STATION.

REF: A) BONN 7376; B) BONN 13986

1. SUMMARY. ON JANUARY 13, 1977 THE 237 MWE-REACTOR
AT GUNDREMMINGEN HAD TO BE SHUT DOWN DUE TO THE
RELEASE OF RADIOACTIVE STEAM INTO THE SAFETY
CONTAINMENT OF THE REACTOR. OFFICIALS STATED THAT
AT NO POINT HAD THE STAFF NOR THE POPULATION
BEEN IN DANGER. IT IS HOPED THAT THE DAMAGE CAN
BE REPAIRED WITHIN ONE OR TWO MONTHS. END SUMMARY

2. THE CAUSE FOR THE FAILURE WAS A BREAKDOWN OF
THE 220 KV POWER LINE BETWEEN AUGSBURG AND ULM.
A SHORT CIRCUIT RESULTED IN THE AUTOMATIC FAST
SCRAM OF THIS BOILING WATER REACTOR. IN SUCH A
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CASE THE POWER TURBINE IS TAKEN OUT OF THE CYCLE
AND THE HIGH PRESSURE STEAM IS FED DIRECTLY
INTO THE CONDENSOR. HOWEVER, BEFORE THIS PROCESS
WAS EFFECTIVE, THE SAFETY VALVES OF THE PRIMARY
CYCLE OPENED AND RELEASED LARGE AMOUNTS OF RADIO-
ACTIVE STEAM INTO THE CONTAINMENT TO REDUCE THE
STEAM PRESSURE. THE TEMPERATURE ROSE FROM NORMAL

90 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT TO 180 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT AND
SUBSEQUENTLY MORE THAN TEN FEET OF RADIOACTIVE
WATER WERE LEFT IN THE 100 FOOT DIAMETER VESSEL.

3. ON JANUARY 16 THE GUNDREMMINGEN DIRECTOR
ANNOUNCED THAT THE TEMPERATURE HAD DROPPED TO ABOUT
TEN DEGREES ABOVE NORMAL, THAT ALL WATER HAD
BEEN PUMPED OUT AND DECONTAMINATED. HE CONTINUED
THAT THE REPAIR WORK WAS TO START THE NEXT DAY
AND WOULD INVOLVE THE DECONTAMINATION OF THE
MECHANICAL AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT. HE DENIED ANY
SPECULATION THAT THE ACCIDENT HAD BEEN CAUSED
BY HUMAN FAILURE AND SAID THAT AN INVESTIGATION
WOULD DETERMINE WHETHER MALFUNCTION OF THE SYSTEM
COULD BE PREVENTED BY MORE ADVANCED DEVICES.

4. EMBASSY COMMENT: THIS MOST RECENT INCIDENT IS
ONLY ONE OF SOME THIRTY INCIDENTS
IN THIS REACTOR, GERMANY'S FIRST COMMERCIAL
REACTOR THAT BEGAN OPERATION IN 1965. MOST OF
THESE INVOLVED CRACKS OR LEAKAGE IN THE COOLING
SYSTEMS (REF B). THE MOST SEVERE INCIDENT LED TO
THE SCALDING OF TWO WORKERS REPAIRING A STEAM VALVE
(REF A). ALTHOUGH THE ACTING GUNDREMMINGEN DIRECTOR
REFUSED TO SPECULATE THAT THE INCREASE IN REPAIR
WORK AND SUBSEQUENT POOR AVAILABILITY WERE CAUSED
BY A BAD DESIGN OF THIS FIRST GENERATION REACTOR,
HIS PREDECESSOR RECENTLY COMPLAINED ABOUT THE
DIFFICULTY IN MAINTAINING THIS REACTOR.
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STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, NUCLEAR HAZARDS, NUCLEAR SAFETY
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BONN00951
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770018-0523
Format: TEL
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
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Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7531dbd5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Original Previous Classification: n/a
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